Easter Sunday C 2025

 “Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark…” This is where we are today. Our world is even more darkened by violence and hatred. Mary of Magdala and others go to the tomb. They come, looking for the body of Jesus. We, too, are gathered to search for the Lord. In the West, God seems to have largely disappeared. Pervasive indifference paralyzes; divisiveness, authoritarianism, and tyranny poison minds and hearts even of many believers. All Christians are searching for the Lord, like Mary of Magdala before dawn.

 We, too, experience the dark. We feel our hope is taken away. But, the Beloved Disciple—(never named because it is each of us, the baptized)—enters, sees, and believes. Although it is dark, Jesus is already present with us. Life begins to seep out into the world. The wonder and the power of the resurrection is beginning to be uncovered, the disciples stumbling towards understanding, and the realization that Jesus is alive, that death could not hold Him bound—the Lord of life. We were once dead. Now we are alive. Jesus was crucified and died. Now He lives in glory, seated at God’s right hand, and with us. We, too, must see and believe, not in an empty tomb, but in the disciples gradually come back to life. May we be the Lord’s beloved disciples who wait on others, and who see and believe, because of Jesus’ love and faithfulness, and His Word to us.

 The resurrection is not Jesus’ life beginning over again, but a new way of being alive in which death and the powers of darkness have been conquered. The resurrection of Jesus will not let us living in the same way. We shall find the Lord who is waiting for us.

 Each of us in fraternity sees what we have to offer that makes a difference. In today’s Gospel, we see Mary of Magdala is drawn by a love that is tender, down to earth, physical. She wishes to care for the body of Jesus, her beloved Lord. She stands for all those whose lives are driven by compassion for the wounded of the world: St Mother Teresa, who searched for the body of her Lord on the streets of Kolkata; St Mother Marianne and St Damien of Molokai who gave their lives to those suffering from leprosy in Hawaii.

 Think also of those millions, like the Magdalene, searching for the bodies of their loved ones, wounded, disappeared, or dead. The world, filled with weeping, is in need of compassion. Hamas committed those terrible atrocities that plunged the Middle East into war. People are weeping in Ukraine and yes, Russia too, at the death and mutilation of hundreds of thousands of young people. They weep, too, in Sudan and Myanmar. Pope Francis convoked “Synodality,” asking the Church to *“listen to the cry of the poor and of those who weep.”* Mary of Magdala is their patron.

 When Mary hears her name: *“Mary,”* her emptiness is filled with more than she could have dreamt, her Love who is alive forever. God always calls us by name. He created us, and formed us, so let us not fear, for we have been redeemed, called by name, and belonging to God.

 She signifies encounter, the presence of the Lord. The first action at our baptism is a request for a name. The name, not a label slapped on to distinguish one from the other; that would make me “Child #3.” Our name says we are treasured by God in our uniqueness. A Roman Emperor saw the world through a census by counting numbers. With God, who changed history in the course of a census, said that you are not a number, but a face. Jesus does not look at numbers, but at faces.

Tyrannical regimes erase names and faces. In Auschwitz, St Maximilian Kolbe became prisoner 16670. The President of Russia has always refused to name the man who bravely opposed him—Alexie Navalny. He was just “a certain person.” Likewise, Nelson Mandela became the face of opposition to the Apartheid regime. And so, when he was imprisoned, it was prohibited to publish an image of his face. It was erased from public memory. So, when after decades in prison, allowed to walk of the beach, no one knew him. His face had been robbed of its power.

 Sisters and brothers, the grace of Jesus’ resurrection gives us the power to walk with others through the darkness and to bask in the light of Easter morn. *Fraternitas!* No longer “conservatives v. progressives” in the Church; no more “red v. blue” in politics. We are searchers and seekers, one for all and all for one.

 But Magdalene’s tender love needs healing. Jesus commands her, *“Do not cling to Me.”* An absurd explanation was heard that Jesus’ wounds were still sore! Jesus is saying that she cannot take private possession of Him. His presence to her is not hers to own. The resurrection is the birth of His community. The People of God is never simply the sum of the baptized, rather, the “we” of the Church.

 Mary is called “the Apostle to the Apostles.” The disciples, in John’s Gospel, are called “brothers” for the first time. *Fratelli tutti!* Her love is free from all exclusivity. Free to proclaim, “I have seen the Lord.” Our challenge as well. This is the love which gives sight. Where there is love there is sight.

